

# — RUSSIA. —

## REPORT OF THE Revolutionary Socialist Party TO THE Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1910.

### I.

Three years have passed since we presented our report to the Stuttgart Congress. While we were writing it the second State Duma was still sitting. It was the Duma which contained forty deputies belonging to our Party, and in which our proposed Agrarian Bill was signed by 104 peasant members of the House—i.e., almost one quarter of its *personnel*. Russia, already proclaimed under martial law, was then delivered up to the uncontrolled power of military governors-general; yet our regional organisations manifested a most energetic activity in all departments of party life. This enabled us, in our report to the Stuttgart Congress, to acquaint the international Labour world with that work of Socialist propaganda, revolutionary agitation and fighting activity which went on under the banner of the Revolutionary-Socialist Party in the big centres, as well as in obscure corners of our vast motherland.

The picture has altogether changed since.

The second Duma was forcibly dissolved. The election law, though already unjust and favourable to the interests of the ruling classes, was so changed as to guarantee a majority to the landlords. The new law of June 3 (16th) entrusted even the election of peasant deputies to bodies in which the landlords formed the majority. The representation of the proletariat was cut down to ridiculously insignificant proportions.



The forcible dissolution of the second Duma was not unforeseen by our Party. The Party clearly understood its inevitable character while holding its second Congress in Tammerfors (Finland) on February 25-28, 1907—i.e., on the eve of the convocation of the second Duma. It formulated its aim within, as well as outside, the Duma at that time thus:—

“So to expose the Government before the people, and so to strengthen the tie between the people and the Duma, as to make any forcible dissolution of the latter a difficult and risky undertaking, and that it should become the starting-point of a new upheaval of the revolutionary movement.”\*

The working people, who were groaning under the yoke of unemployment, poverty and unspeakable repression, which did not allow them to organise for a new movement and a new struggle, proved to be unable to reply to the *coup d'état* of June 3 (16th) in the only proper manner—by an immediate general rising. Yet at its third session (in August, 1907,) taking the view:—

“(a) That the general causes which called forth the Russian revolution and deepened its social substance, far from losing their working power, continue to develop with increasing vigour”;

“(b) That the development of the economic crisis with its natural concomitants—famine and unemployment—is a lengthy process, during which the years of good crops and improvement in trade represent only temporary fluctuations, which have no influence on the general trend of events”;

“(c) That Governmental measures, far from removing the paralysis of all the productive forces of the country, still more entangle the general situation,”

the Party Council expressed

“its deep conviction that, contrary to all the hopes of the reactionary elements, the Russian revolution, far from having been crushed, acquires a more and more steady basis in the growing discontent and consciousness of the masses.”†

The revolutionary energy of the masses, being unable because of the unheard-of repression to manifest itself in any organised form, broke out in useless individual excesses. Therefore, the

\* “The resolution of the second Congress of the R.S.P. on Tactics within and outside the Duma” (in Russian); in French in “La Tribune Russe,” Nos. 2 and 3, 1907, p. 5.

† “Communication on the third Session of the Council of the R.S.P.,” published (in Russian) in St. Petersburg in July, 1907; in French in “La Tribune Russe,” No. 8, 1907, p. 8.

third Council called the special attention of the Party organisations to “all those methods of struggle which in their essence require the organised activity of the masses and spur them to broad organisation.”

“Considering disunited small outbursts to be a useless waste of energy,” the third Council at the same time foresaw the possibility of broad mass movements among the peasantry as well as the troops under the influence of the disappointment which must inevitably take hold of the masses. Starting from the idea that

“a rising in arms must be imagined not as a simultaneous and universal outbreak according to a given signal, but as a natural phenomenon into which sufficiently broad and successful local movements may develop,”

the third Council recommended to the local Party organisations not to hinder such movements ready to break out where there is a chance that they might have a vast, if even a temporary, success; but

“to see that every such spontaneous and broad mass movements against the Czar’s authorities and the present régime should not be deprived of organisation, and should develop on the basis of a certain plan.”

Viewing the then situation from such a standpoint, the third Council of the Party pronounced against taking any part in the elections to the third State Duma. Only those who have lost all hope in further revolutionary tactics could logically enter, as deputies, the third Duma; to these any abstention from electioneering would signify passiveness and inactivity. The new election law was nothing else than an attack on positions already carried by the people. In the Party’s opinion, such an onslaught ought to be replied to not by reconciling oneself to the fact, but by a still keener struggle. Therefore

“the strongest and most imposing reply to the counter-revolution of June 3 (16th), as well as the strongest and most striking rupture between the people on the one hand and the monarchy and the dynasty on the other”

should be the boycotting of the elections to the third Duma.

Such were the considerations which led our Party to a declaration of such a boycotting. In this decision it was isolated. All other parties—with the exception of the Polish Socialist Party—resolved to take part in the elections. Our Party had to develop an energetic agitation in the country, maintaining among the population a revolutionary attitude towards the usurpatory practices of the Government. And the most



conscious sections of the working people approved of, and supported, our boycotting tactics.

In St. Petersburg 59 manufactories had the right to take part in the elections; of these 28, i.e., nearly the half, boycotted the elections. At the 31 remaining establishments only an insignificant minority voted at all. Thus at six of the biggest factories, employing, in the aggregate, 21,885 men, only 5,000—i.e., less than one-fourth—voted. The proletariat of St. Petersburg, whose majority voted during the elections to the second Duma (at the beginning of 1907) for Revolutionary Socialists\* remained loyal to our Party, and boycotted the elections to the third Duma by a still heavier majority. In the province of Moscow 54 out of 310 establishments boycotted the elections to a man; at the remaining ones only a minority of the workers took part in the elections. In Simferopol, according to the reactionary press, “for several consecutive days all the streets, lanes, and even dark corners of the town were literally bestrewn with the manifestoes of the Revolutionary-Socialist Party” suggesting the boycotting of the Duma. This appeal met with a warm response among the working masses.

The same picture in the Ural region. There the propaganda of the boycott fell on well-tilled ground, and met with sympathy. At the Katovo-Ivanovsky mills, where at the preceding elections over 1,000 men voted (for Revolutionary Socialists), this time only a miserable tiny knot of about a score of voters gathered and resolved to elect one delegate in spite of the wish to the contrary of the boycotting majority. In the Viatka province, to avoid a similar occurrence, Revolutionary Socialists were elected as delegates for the purpose of carrying on the boycotting programme at the further stages of the election procedure. In the town of Zlatoust only 90 voters out of 4,000 took part in the elections, while at the elections to the second Duma Revolutionary Socialists gained the victory by an enormous majority. At the large factory centre of Motovilikha only 400 men voted out of 7,000; out of 900 railwaymen only 90 could be with difficulty induced to vote, etc., etc. The same kind of things happened in Briansk, Tver, Shouya, Penza, Kremenchoug, etc. There elections either could not take place at all, or—which happened oftener—only an insignificant minority of factory hands took

\* The deputy to the Duma elected by the representatives of factory workers was not a Revolutionary Socialist, but this was so only because the big factories which elected Revolutionary Socialist delegates were placed, by the rules of the election law, in a less favourable position than the representatives of small establishments.

part in them. In many places the working people expressed their displeasure at the fact that the Party rejected the tactics of active boycotting—i.e., the *sabotage* of the electioneering procedure. In some cases (for example, in the Ural region), the boycotting majority prevented by threats the minority, who wanted to elect delegates (in the name of all the voters), from doing so.

In the villages our Party was greatly weakened by incessant arrests, exile, and executions. Therefore it could not develop the necessary universal agitation. Even in better times it would be very difficult to organise the boycotting of the elections in view of the sparseness of the rural population over an immense territory. Yet wherever our organisations could display even some amount of energy in carrying out the boycott agitation, they attained a manifest result. Thus, in the Viatka province\* our committee could send out only four agitators. And yet in one place the villagers signed a communal resolution not to hold any elections at all, and in a number of other *volosts* the population simply declined to take part in the elections, notwithstanding the threats of crown officials, and in some cases the fining of non-voters. In the Dikanka *volost* of the Poltava province the peasants were twice fined for boycotting the elections: half a rouble per head the first time, a rouble each the second time. Notwithstanding this the elections could not take place.†

Even in places where elections did take place an extreme indifference, evolving into disgust and animosity, with respect to the elections to the third Duma was noticed. “We have already elected deputies twice! That is quite sufficient. We are not children to be played with!”—such was the general frame of mind of the masses who were forcibly driven to the poll by the authorities, who wanted to squeeze out of the country desirable and docile deputies at any price.

The boycotting tactics of the Revolutionary Socialist Party were an attempt to consolidate and organise the working masses on the ground of irreconcilable opposition to a tyrannical Government. Such tactics responded, no doubt, to the frame of mind of those masses, to their feeling of self-respect. These tactics did not lead to the formation among the working masses of strong and permanent organisations for the struggle against the Government for political rights of the working class and the people generally. Nor did the opposite type of tactics, that of the Social-Democrats, of taking part in elections, prevent it, as all

\* Comprising a territory of 134,538 square versts.

† In all, in about 500 *volosts* (out of about 19,000) the elections did not actually take place in the whole of Russia.



working-class political organisations were thoroughly crushed under the blows of unprecedented Governmental repression.

The Revolutionary-Socialist Party, however, did not expect immediate success when it adopted boycotting tactics. The Party knew that the third Duma would meet, and pointed out in advance what that Duma would be—a blind instrument in the hands of the Government, a central consolidation of all the reactionary forces, viz., of the landlords and the wealthier *bourgeoisie*, a convenient staging for the benefit of the financial oligarchy of Western Europe for the purpose of saving the remnants of the credit of bankrupt absolutism, and, finally, a means of having most reactionary measures (Finland, Poland, the Jews, University Statutes, etc.) adopted by a "Parliament," and thus to discredit the very principle of Russian representative government.

The Revolutionary-Socialist Party relied mainly on moral success, and the fact that its attitude has been vindicated by the whole activity of the third Duma for the last two and a-half years, and that it corresponded more than once to the course adopted by the opposition parties in the Duma, has secured to our Party the possibility of a broad political influence on the masses in more favourable circumstances in the future.

## II.

The year 1908 found the Revolutionary-Socialist Party under the full weight of most vigorous Governmental repression, and face to face with a general lull in the political life of the country.

The radical change of circumstances put before the Party the necessity of adopting resolutions concerning tactics as well as organisation. Particularly keen was the need of finding out the strength of the Party, consolidating all that was left from the Governmental ravages, and adapting them to the altered circumstances. It was, therefore, decided to convene a Party Conference of representatives of all the still-existing organisations for the purpose of discussing and coming to a decision on all pressing questions.

This Conference, which was preceded in the spring of 1908 throughout Russia by local Congresses in each of our districts, took place in London in August of the same year. It was attended by delegates from all the large Labour and peasant centres (except the Moscow district)—viz., from St. Petersburg, the Ural, the Caucasus, the Volga, Ukraina and the extreme

south. The Conference was attended by seventy-four persons, lasted twelve days, and held twenty-four sittings.\*

It became clear from the reports of the delegates that, notwithstanding the trying conditions of the movement and of the system of Governmental persecutions and provocations which led to the destruction of a number of organisations, the spirit of the working masses and the peasantry had not been crushed, that the consciousness of the people awakened by all the preceding events continued to grow, and that a vast field was still secured for the revolutionary socialistic activity of the Party.

The Conference passed resolutions on all urgent questions,† and outlined the plan of the future activities of the Party.

The Party viewed the actual moment as transient, as one of preparation for the inevitably-approaching new wave of popular revolution. The Conference, therefore, decided to put to the front a systematic Socialist propaganda among the masses, the strengthening of the ties between the masses and the secretly-existing party organisations, as well as the consolidation of those organisations into one harmonious whole. The terroristic struggle with the Government should in no way crumble into acts that could have no political significance; but, on the contrary, must be altogether concentrated.

The Conference worked out a series of resolutions on questions of tactics among the peasantry and the working men—viz., on the forms and methods of struggle against the Governmental legislation on the land question as well as with the landlords, on trade unionism and the co-operative movement, on unemployment, on collective agreement, on lock-outs, etc.‡

Almost complete unanimity was manifested in the adoption of these resolutions, and this proved to be a most favourable circumstance for the further activity of the Party in carrying out the decisions arrived at. During the latter part of 1908 and the beginning of 1909 the work of party organisations was mainly spent on increasing the propaganda by word and print, and on the consolidation of our influence in specially-important dis-

\* The inauguration of this Conference was attended by our British comrades H. M. Hyndman and J. F. Green. All particulars concerning it may be found in the Russian report published by the Central Committee of the Party.

† These resolutions were published in Russian (in Sept., 1908): "Communication of the Central Committee of the R.S.P. on the Party Conference and the fourth Session of the Council." In French in "La Tribune Russe," Nos. 9-10, 1909.

‡ See "La Tribune Russe," Nos. 9-10, 1908, pp. 3-9.



tricts, according to the plan worked out by the London Conference and sanctioned by the fourth Council of the Party, which held its meetings immediately after the close of the Conference. During the period ranging from the latter part of 1907 to the end of 1908 the Party (mainly through its Central Committee) put into circulation over 2,000,000 printed sheets of all kinds of literature (newspapers, reviews, pamphlets, books, etc.). The income of the Central Committee alone for 1908 was 170,000 roubles (about £17,000), expenditure amounting to about £16,000. Of this, organising work took about £8,000, publishing about £2,640, the militant organisation about £2,320.

### III.

Numerous cases of "provocation" systematically and diligently cultivated by the Tzar's Government as a means of struggle against revolution have been of late detected in all Socialist and revolutionary parties. Early in 1909 a particularly important case of such "provocation" was divulged, owing to the energetic help of comrade V. T. Burtsev, in the ranks of the Revolutionary-Socialist Party in the person of one Evno Azef. This fact dealt a heavy blow to the Party. It created a number of serious difficulties, and temporarily upset the systematic work of the Party. Yet it has outlived this very serious trial, and recovered from it.

In May, 1909, the fifth session of the Council of the Party was hurriedly summoned. Its *personnel* was not large, owing to the exceptional difficulties in the way of convening it, yet it consisted of representatives of the most important district organisations. It first fixed its attention on the liquidation of the consequences of Azef's treachery. The Council stated that, however heavy the blow administered to the Party, it did not affect such a result as that wished for by the Tzar's Government, and of which it cynically spoke through Stolypin, viz., it did not create demoralisation and collapse in the ranks of the Party. The Council ascertained and recorded that the damage done by this black deed, though great, was happily localised, and that the exposure in the party ranks of a traitor, whose nefarious activity had undermined for many years a great many party enterprises, would now serve as a stimulus for the discovery and eradication of defects in the party organisation.

The fifth Council also discussed plans of party activity in the near future in connection with the peculiarities of the moment. The Council started from the admission that no essential changes had occurred in the general status in the country, as well as in the policy of the Government since the London Conference. The former programme of tactics was therefore left intact, and the

Council fixed its attention on a more detailed definition of some questions, particularly those connected with organisation, and worked out a number of instructions dealing with different branches of the work of the Party—among the proletariat, the peasantry, the army and the educated class (*intelligenza*).

Out of tactical considerations the Council decided to accept the resignation of the former Central Committee, expressing, however, complete confidence in its *personnel*. It elected a new Central Committee and a judicial Committee to make an enquiry into and liquidate all the consequences of Azef's case. The Committee had also to establish the comparative responsibilities of all concerned. This body is now concluding its labours, and its report is expected very shortly.

All the resolutions of the fifth session of the Council\* were submitted to a referendum of the Party and sanctioned by an overwhelming majority.

The fifth session of the Council had another significance in the life of the Party during the period in question. It made it possible to fulfil that work which is so very important for every party working secretly underground, having no possibility of holding public meetings, regular intercourse, etc. Owing to the Council's labours, a certain estimate of the existing forces of the Party was made, a picture of its present condition was drawn, and the results of what it had lived through were summed up.

All the speakers unanimously agreed as to the extremely hard times through which the country was passing as the result of the reaction that followed the epoch of the liberation struggle. The Government, having acquired in the third Duma a faithful assistant, openly took the path of systematic persecution of any manifestations of free thought or free action. It tried to destroy all the social, enlightening, trade unionist, or working-class organisations. It fell on the Socialist parties with unheard-of cruelty. Prisons and the places of exile were swarming with the victims of Governmental persecution. Several thousand men and women were strangled on the gallows.

The peasantry attracted the particular attention of the Government. The unanimity with which the Russian peasants persistently demanded in 1905 and 1906 that all private landed property should be declared to be the property of the people

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\* Published by the Central Committee of the R.S.P. in May, 1909, in Russian, and entitled "Communication on the Fifth Session of the Council of the R.S.P." In French in "La Tribune Russe," No. 7, 1909, pp. 12-19.



greatly alarmed the Tzar's Government. It, therefore, decided to disorganise the peasants by fixing their attention on the communal lands as a possible prey, and by practically establishing in the ukase of November 9, 1906 (o.s.), a premium on their plunder, M. Stolypin's Government devised a plan for creating a support to landlordism in a new class of "strong" and "solid" peasantry operating on private landed property and knowing its sweetness. The Government resolved to attain this end at the price of the utter ruin of the "drunkards and weaklings," as Stolypin contemptuously called the already impoverished, half-proletarianised majority of the peasantry, by kicking them off the land. As a matter of fact, Stolypin's Government is creating, with the exception of individual usurers and exploiters, a new class of fictitious, illusory landowners and land tenants enslaved by enormously heavy payments to the Peasant Bank on the one hand and the doubled and trebled army of officials (bank officials, agrarian officials, and the like). The Peasant Bank has already become the largest landowner in the Empire; it owns four millions of *dessiatins* of land besides the lands that are mortgaged to it. By supplanting the many thousands of landowners who hold their real estate by this one official institution, the Government only concentrates on itself all the hatred of the peasantry enmeshed in exorbitant payments. The forcible destruction of communal land tenure only sows discord and hatred, and that in the first place for the arbitrariness and violence of the authorities, but it does not create a free landowner who would be able to strengthen the shaken status for any considerable time. It does not create in Russia conditions of *bourgeois* existence as some of our "Marxist" writers expected. Not in the least. It is nothing but a still worse arbitrariness of officialism, a still worse ruin of the peasantry, and a return to the serfdom which prevailed before its abolition.

#### IV.

The wave of reaction in society, and the Governmental white terror have had their influence on the position of the Party. It could not be otherwise. Like all other Socialist parties, it had to return to its former status of an underground organisation, and in these unfavourable circumstances it had to strain all its forces to withstand the attacks of the Government.

Without neglecting any of the opportunities afforded by organisations tolerated by the law (trade unions, co-operative societies, "popular universities," etc.) for the defence and strengthening of its positions, the Party concentrated its main efforts on the propaganda of its ideas among the advanced layers of the proletariat as well as the peasantry, and on organising secret party

nucleuses, bound by various threads to the working masses at large. However trying the circumstances, they did not stop the work of our Party. It had already spent an enormous amount of energy for the awakening of popular consciousness. This consciousness has grown, and must now serve as a reliable ground for not allowing the reaction to take root, and for depriving the Governmental policy of the people's support.

The Party Council certified, as the London Conference had done a year before, that the working masses were not on the side of the reaction; that their revolutionary action went down, even died out at times, in those localities only which suffered most from Governmental repression, but that an enormous porportion of these masses remained loyal to revolution. Reaction came into contact with those most advanced ranks which were nearest to the enemy's camp; the upper layers of our organisations suffered most, and the main work of the Party was concentrated on rebuilding them and connecting them with one another. As before, the party organisation concentrated mainly in the most important centres, comprising a large territory of Russia proper as well as of the borderland. Party work was carried on in St. Petersburg and Moscow, in the adjoining regions of the Baltic and of the North, mainly in Riga, in the provinces of Archangel and Vologda; then came the agricultural region of the Ukraina, consisting of the provinces of Kharkov, Kiëv, Kursk, Voronezh and Poltava. There the Party centres of the towns concentrated their activity on the restoration of their connections with peasant organisations, a great number of which outlived the Governmental repression. This territory borders on the so-called South region, where systematic work was carried on almost exclusively among the peasantry of two provinces—Taurida and part of Kherson—where peasant brotherhoods continued their existence and new ones sprung up. In some localities they were federated in regional organisations.

In the enormous agricultural region of the Volga, which played so prominent a part in the revolutionary movement, party work was carried on under far worse conditions. In this part of Russia Governmental repression played havoc, attacking mainly the advanced peasantry and the leading party organisations. It was impossible to regenerate these organisations, and this made it difficult to discover and unite those revolutionary and party elements which, no doubt, still exist among the Volga peasants.

Revolutionary work was also carried on among the peasantry of single provinces of the midlands and east of Russia. In some districts, particularly in the provinces of Nizhni-Novgorod, Riazan and Viatka, there existed peasant organisations (so-called brotherhoods) which fulfilled their functions regularly and uninter-ruptedly.



As to party activity among the factory proletariat, it was mainly confined, apart from St. Petersburg and Moscow, to the mining district of the Ural and the naphtha industry of the Caucasus (Baku). The Ural mountain district, particularly the metallurgical works in the districts of Zlatoust, Izheva, Motovilikh, etc., has long represented a well-organised labour as well as party territory, carrying on good work. The same may be said of the Caucasian region, with the town of Baku as its centre, where party work attained considerable successes among the Russian as well as the indigenous proletariat, and has progressed steadily during recent years notwithstanding the unfavourable surrounding conditions.

Besides the places mentioned above, where party work was carried on on organised lines, there exist a number of places scattered about throughout Russia, as well as in the borderlands, in which remnants of party organisations among the peasants, proletarians and the army and navy are to be found, which, however, could not be connected with the central nucleus of the Party.

## V.

The picture of the territorial position of the Party given above, as drawn at the fifth session of the Party Council, convened in the spring of 1909, has not essentially changed in any respect during the most recent period. The activity of party organisations now increases and develops, now weakens, in different localities according to chance or general influences, yet on the whole it continues to be concentrated within those territorial limits which were built up historically during the long preceding period of work.

The necessity of keeping the party activity secret and underground does not allow of a more detailed description being given of single organisations, nor statistical details of their *personnel*—in a word, does not permit of an accurate estimate being given of the forces and means of the Party.

The literary activity of the Party, which was temporarily concentrated abroad because of the specially-trying police measures in Russia, may be sketched within the limits of the period under review as follows:—

The Central Committee publish "Znamya Truda" (The Labour Banner), the central organ of the party; "Za Narod" (For the People), a journal for propaganda in the army and navy; "Zemlya y Volya" (Land and Freedom), a popular organ for the peasantry; and "Narodnoye Dyelo" (The People's Cause), a sort of popular review for the working masses. The "Tribune Russe" was also published at the expense of the Central Committee,

but its publication ceased at the beginning of 1910 owing to the ill-health of the principal editor. In 1910 a new quarterly was started by the Party (in Russian) under the title of "The Revolutionary-Socialist." It is dedicated to the theoretical and platform questions of revolutionary Socialism.

The following pamphlets and books have also been published by the Central Committee:—Steblyov: "The Law for the Ruin of the Peasantry" (two editions); Sevin: "The Struggle of Italian Peasants against their Landlords"; Vinnichenko: "A Struggle"; Shishko: "The Law of November 9, 1906"; Ulianov: "An Open Letter from a Deputy of the first Duma to the Peasants"; Guer-shuni: "Reminiscences"; Anonymously: "Reports of the London Conference," "In Memory of Shihko," etc. In all, 54,000 copies of periodicals and 22,000 copies of pamphlets and books were distributed by the Central Committee during the twelve months from June 1, 1909, to June 1, 1910. Taking 40,000 letters for every printed sheet, this amounts to 250,000 sheets.

For the importation of this literature into Russia a special Transport Commission was organised by the Central Committee, which spent on publication, transport, and other necessities of the general organisation during the same period—June, 1909, to June, 1910—some 80,000 roubles (about £8,000).

As to local revolutionary publications [published in Russia] we can only give very general information, as the disclosure of details would endanger their existence. During the last three years, 1907-1910, the Government unearthed and stamped out a great many secret printing offices. Not infrequently on these occasions not only did the printers go to prison, but also all the staff of the paper concerned. Seven regional committees, viz., the Trans-Caucasian, Northern, Ukrainian, North-Western, Ural, as well as the Siberian Union and the Taurida Union, published in all thirteen periodicals. The maximum impression was printed by the North-Western Committee, and amounted to 5,000 copies. Fifteen Town Committees published in all 21 periodicals. Three groups of working men published three journals. Thus 25 party organisations published in all 37 periodicals, besides those issued by the Central Committee. Of the different trade unions which adopted more or less in full the platform of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and issued their own organs at different periods of the three years reported on, we may point out the following:—The Post and Telegraph Workers' Union, the Pan-Russian Railway Union, the Union of Seamen and Dockers of the Black Sea, the Union of the Seamen of the Caspian Commercial Fleet. The Army Officers' Union, which published a monthly entitled "The National Army," and the Pan-Russian Union of Soldiers and Sailors, which published



four organs within its three sections—those of Taurida, Trans-Baikal, and Finland—were also strongly under the influence of our Party.

## VI.

Reaction is triumphant in Russia at the present time. The country is going through the hard times of a counter-revolution. Public thought is confused, political indifference is growing, and literature in decadence. A number of writers, who not long ago occupied a prominent position among the literary forces of progressive parties, and some of whom even acted under a "Marxist" banner, have at present openly taken the lead in spiritual reaction. They have more or less turned their front in the direction of "order," of nationalism, of official orthodox religion, and even do not disdain to take under their protection Russian clericalism. Pornographic literature, almost unknown hitherto, has now acquired a steady position in the literary market. Side by side with this, the downfall of demand for serious theoretical works has been noticed, as well as an ever-growing unsteadiness and capriciousness in the taste of the reading public. In a word, the victory of reaction has not been confined to outward life only. A considerable majority of cultured society has succumbed to the spiritual influence of the counter-revolution. These facts must be pointed out side by side with the opposite and very gratifying phenomena which we have underlined when speaking of the working masses.

One must not omit to point out, however, that just at this moment symptoms of a certain reaction against the above-mentioned deterioration are apparent. Political tyranny is becoming more and more unbearable. All the attempts of the Opposition at organic work in the State Duma have proved futile. All concessions and compromises of the Opposition could not get it out of the position of a hunted beast; on the contrary, they have only increased the unscrupulousness and arrogance of the Extreme Right. Thus, *nolens volens*, the Opposition has been forced to adopt more demonstrative tactics. Several times it has had recourse to leaving the Chamber by way of protest. This step had, however, as little success. At present its repetition no longer produces any impression on the Governmental *bloc*. This *bloc* counts on the Opposition never daring to leave the Duma altogether, because this would mean a complete break-up of the quasi-constitutional *régime*, and an appeal to the country to return to the irreconcilable revolutionary tactics. The Tzar's Government reckons that constitutional decorum with all its accessories will be preserved, although the savage lawlessness which rules the country and the unbridled behaviour of the

Duma "Black Hundred" convert this quasi-Parliament into an abominable and miserable farce hitherto unknown in history. The more and more unrestrained attitude of this Russian *chambre introuvable*, together with the flabbiness of the Opposition, is preparing a new turn of sympathy towards the Socialist and Revolutionary parties, our Party with its irreconcilable tactics among them. As a matter of fact, a kind of boycott is already hanging over the Duma, a boycott of general indifference and contempt. Discontent among the working masses is yet far from any wide collective manifestations. Nevertheless, a certain atmosphere of intense expectation, some vague undefined hopes, and seeking for an outlet is already growing. At such moments a daring revolutionary initiative is capable of bringing about a discharge of electricity in the atmosphere, and thus might serve as a turning-point towards a new popular upheaval, especially if the revolutionary forces were by that time collected, consolidated, and ready for attack. To this work of collecting and consolidating the revolutionary Socialist forces—to this preparation for a decided attack—the Revolutionary-Socialist Party is now dedicating its efforts.